CORONAVIRUS: STARTUP PRODUCES AT-HOME TESTING. PAGE A15

SUBSCRIBERS: HOW TO ACTIVATE YOUR ONLINE SUBSCRIPTION AND E-EDITION

Q: How do I activate my unlimited digital access?
A: Go to HoustonChronicle.com/activate and follow the instructions to activate or upgrade your account for unlimited HoustonChronicle.com access.

Q: How do I access the electronic replica of the newspaper?
A: Log in to HoustonChronicle.com, click the expandable menu (top left) and select e-edition.

HOUSTON CHRONICLE

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2020 • HOUSTONCHRONICLE.COM • VOL. 119, NO. 185 • $2.00 ★★

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Feds craft plan to lift lockdown

Strategy detailed by CDC, FEMA is part of Trump push for a 'road map' to reopening

By Lena H. Sun, Josh Dawsey and William Wan
WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON – A team of government officials – led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – has created a public health strategy to combat the coronavirus and reopen parts of the country.

Their strategy, obtained by the Washington Post, is part of a larger White House effort to draft a national plan to get Americans out of their homes and back to work. It gives guidance to state and local governments on how they can ease mitigation efforts, moving from drastic restrictions such as stay-at-home orders in a phased way to support a safe reopening.

CDC and FEMA officials have worked on the public health response for at least the past week, and the resulting document by the two agencies has been discussed at the White House including by members of the coronavirus task force, according to two administration officials speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

President Donald Trump wants a final detailed plan on re-

Strategy continues on A7

Nursing homes tied to 22% of state's toll

By Emily Foxhall
STAFF WRITER

More than 1 in 5 coronavirus-related deaths in Texas have been linked to skilled nursing homes, according to a Houston Chronicle analysis of state data, illustrating the vulnerability of older residents in group settings to the deadly virus.

Data shows that 22 percent of deaths related to COVID-19 as of Monday were connected to nursing homes, while another 8 percent were linked to assisted-living facilities, which provide a less-intensive level of care.

The figures help clarify what has been a murky understanding of how the coronavirus has affected such facilities and those who rely on them. At least two nursing homes and one assisted living facility in the Houston area have been the scene of outbreaks, leading to at least two deaths. A total of 16 residents of a

Deaths continues on A6

Panic is mounting for small businesses

By L.M. Sixel
STAFF WRITER

Many small-business owners, already struggling as a near nationwide shutdown has forced many to close up shop, now are hamstrung by the government agency that is supposed to offer help as websites crash and telephone hold times stretch for hours.

The $2 trillion federal stimulus bill Congress passed last month added a new $10,000 emergency advance that doesn't have to be repaid when small businesses apply for low-interest disaster loans. The money was to be available within three days of a successful application, but the Small Business Administration website now merely promises that funds will arrive within days.

Nicole Murray, owner of That

Business continues on A6

'I'D RATHER BE POOR AND ALIVE'

Elizabeth Conley / Staff photographer

Bianca Huerta and her husband work at the same refinery. She's breastfeeding Everley and worries about getting infected.

Essential workers weigh livelihood and putting themselves, families at risk

By Sarah Smith
STAFF WRITER

If Misty Jackson's husband stops working, she and her family will have no source of income. If he keeps working, she thinks she may die – or worse, kill someone else.

Jackson, 34, has asthma, hypertension, hyperthyroidism and sleep apnea. She takes over a dozen medications each day. She and her husband talk constantly about what to do. They and their son can't quite make it on unemployment. The family's bills are already past due: Rent is paid up, they're behind on electric.

"I told him, 'I don't care if you lose your job, I'd rather be poor and alive,'" she said. "And I couldn't live if I got someone else sick."

They're making the decision not just for themselves, but for their son and her husband's grandmother, who lives in town. She relies on them for groceries and medical trips.

As businesses across the country are forced to shut down because of the novel coronavirus, people are filing for unemployment in record numbers. But essential workers who either have preexisting conditions themselves or have family members with diagnoses that leave them vulnerable are left

Workers continues on A6

More inside

» *Texans launch free program for online learning.* **Page A2**

» *A look into the lab that processes local virus tests.* **Page A3**

» *Shutdown could cost Astros 40% of revenue.* **Page A9**

» *Some grocery shelves are empty. Here's why.* **Page A15**

» *Loan demand dries up city's funding.* **Page B1**

ELECTION 2020

Women grapple with sex assault claim against Biden

By Lena Felton
WASHINGTON POST

In late March, Anna Fahr, a 38-year-old independent filmmaker, went down an internet rabbit hole. She Googled and tweeted and posted on Facebook: She wanted to know why she couldn't find any mainstream outlets' stories about Tara Reade – a woman who alleges former vice president Joe Biden sexually assaulted her when she was working in his Senate office in 1993. First, a friend had sent her the link to a March 24 Intercept article that detailed how the legal advocacy organization Time's Up declined to fund Reade's allegation. Then, Fahr listened to a March 25 interview in which Reade told her story to progressive podcast host Katie Halper.

It "set off alarm bells" that an allegation against the leading Democratic presidential candidate seemed to be "hush-hush," says Fahr, an American citizen who's splitting her time between Toronto and Beirut. In the age of #MeToo, she wondered: "Why in this particular case are we not having a conversation about this?"

Biden

Fahr had followed the several allegations of Biden's inappropriate touching when they first arose last spring. Reade, now 56, had been one of those women – she said Biden touched her neck and shoulders when she worked in his Senate office. But a year later, on the podcast, Reade said that Biden pinned her against a wall, reached under her skirt and pushed his fingers inside her when she was a 29-year-old staff assistant. Biden's campaign has strongly denied Reade's allegations.

While the initial allegations of inappropriate touching were

Biden continues on A7

Index

Business B1	Directory A2	Lottery A2	Sports A9
Comics D7	Editorials A12	Markets B4	TV D4
Crossword D4	Horoscope D5	Obituaries B7	Weather B8

@HoustonChron | Houston-Chronicle | @HoustonChron | @HoustonChronicle

Breaking news alerts: Text Houston to 77453

HoustonChronicle.com: Visit now for breaking news, constantly updated stories, sports coverage, podcasts and a searchable news archive.

6 37953 11111 0